

ELLE TRAVEL & LIFESTYLE DIRECTOR

SUSAN WARD DAVIES

CAMBODIA Bill Bensley, eccentric hotelier/eco warrior, has a new project in the Cambodia rainforest: Shinta Mani Wild. Set alongside waterfalls, the sustainable site will take glamping to a new level with 16 luxury tents in the wilderness of Tmor Rung, designed to 'invoke the feeling of going on a jungle safari with Jackie O'. And to make it even more unforgettable, you have to zip wire into reception on arrival. For tailor-made trips, see originaltravel.co.uk. *Shinta Mani Wild* (shintamani.com). Doubles from £322, full board.

RWANDA With a One&Only resort opening in Nyungwe National Park, and RwandAir's direct flights from Gatwick, Rwanda's nature offerings are in our sights: swimming in craters, hanging out with gorillas and climbing volcanoes. This beautiful country has worked to put the horrific 1994 genocide behind it, and the government aims for the nation to be on middle income by 2020. Not only is it safe to travel around, but 65% of its parliament are women*. It sure gets our vote. *One&Only Nyungwe House* (oneandonlyresorts.com). Doubles from £606, half board. *RwandAir* (rwandair.com) has return flights from London Gatwick to Rwandan capital Kigali from £565.

CROATIA With *Mamma Mia! Here We Go Again* having wrapped on the pretty island of Vis, and the latest James Bond film shooting in Dubrovnik, Croatia has two more reasons to move up our go-see list this year. Stay, like the Bond crew, at *Hotel Excelsior Dubrovnik* (adriaticluxuryhotels.com). Doubles from £121, B&B. Follow the *Mamma Mia!* team to *Villa Serena* (visvillas.com), which sleeps 10, from £489, and *Palazzo Kut* (visvillas.com), which sleeps 15, from £1,156. For more information on Vis, visit navigator.hr.



'At Shinta Mani Wild you have to ZIP WIRE into reception'

SUSAN WARD DAVIES



FOUNDER OF GLOBETRENDER

JENNY SOUTHAN

ROBO RETAIL The future of shopping is automation. In Shanghai, Moby-Mart (themobymart.com) is a self-driving supermarket with holographic AI staff, where customers pay via an app (to avoid theft, you need to be a member to gain access). Luxury vending machines are also popping up: the Mandarin Oriental (mandarinoriental.com) in Las Vegas has one that sells mini bottles of Moët champagne.

ULTRA-FAST TRANSPORT In 2017, billionaire inventor Elon Musk shortlisted 10 potential routes for his ambitious, ultra-fast Hyperloop One train. With pods shooting through tubes at more than 700mph, cities will be connected in minutes instead of hours. The plan is to have three routes up and running by 2021, including London to Edinburgh (41 minutes).

SPACE TOURISM Richard Branson has announced that Virgin Galactic (virgingalactic.com) will be ready to take regular people into space in 2018. (Leonardo DiCaprio has tickets, which start from around £189k.) Another Elon Musk project – SpaceX (spacex.com) – will take two people on a trip around the moon next year, while Amazon founder Jeff Bezos has set up a rocket company, Blue Origin (blueorigin.com).

FACIAL SCANNING

In the same way that the new iPhone X can be unlocked by looking at it, airports are installing biometric check-in and boarding gates using facial recognition, so you don't have to show your passport. In 2018, Dubai airport will unveil a tunnel lined with 80 cameras that scan you as you walk through. Facial scanning is being tested in US airports as part of the Biometric Exit programme. In the UK, British Airways is testing self-boarding gates, too.

'Facial SCANNING is being tested in the US'

JENNY SOUTHAN

few feet of the bed, there are stations equipped with TRX straps, Wattbikes, weights and screens for virtual personal training sessions. The minibar is even stocked with protein shakes, coconut water and Biofreeze muscle tension gel. In 2019, luxury gym chain Equinox (equinox.com) will open its first hotel in New York.

CO-LIVING Communal living spaces are a good alternative to Airbnbs; these slick, modern apartments have kitchens, gyms, cinemas and hang-out areas. Leading the pack is The Collective (thecollective.co.uk) in London, and Room (room.co), which has hubs in London, Bali, Tokyo and Miami.

FITNESS HOTELS

In 2017, Hilton launched Five Feet To Fitness (fivefeetofitness.hilton.com), becoming the first major chain to install gyms in hotel rooms so people can work out in private. Within a

PAKISTAN The country's 70th birthday celebrations in 2017 have put it back on the tourist radar – hotel bookings increased 80%**. A fleet of new planes now connects the beautiful north with the capital city of Islamabad, vast lengths of the famous Karakoram Highway have been completely rebuilt, and a new tunnel around Attabad Lake has reopened the road north to Kashgar and central Asia. Many hotels are upping their game, including the lovely boutique hotel Hindu Kush Heights (hindukush.com.pk) in Chitral, which now has a swimming pool and a restaurant. *Tailor-made trips can be arranged by Wild Frontiers* (wildfrontierstravel.com).

THE BALKANS Short-haul, short-length adventures are going to be big in 2018, and the Balkans are perfect for this. Since the war of the Nineties, the Balkan Peninsula has been quietly developing into an off-the-beaten-track magnet, and with Montenegro's 16th-century Venetian forts now one of UNESCO's World Heritage Sites, this region is only going to get hotter. Stay at the *Sunrose Apartments Sveti Stefan in Budva, Montenegro* (svetistefan.com). Doubles from £736, B&B. ▷

WHO WHAT WHERE 2018...

FOUNDER OF WILD FRONTIERS

JONNY BEALBY

Collages: Gus & Stella. Photographs: Four Corners, Getty Images. * mokrora.co.uk, May 2016. ** bloomberg.com, September 2017

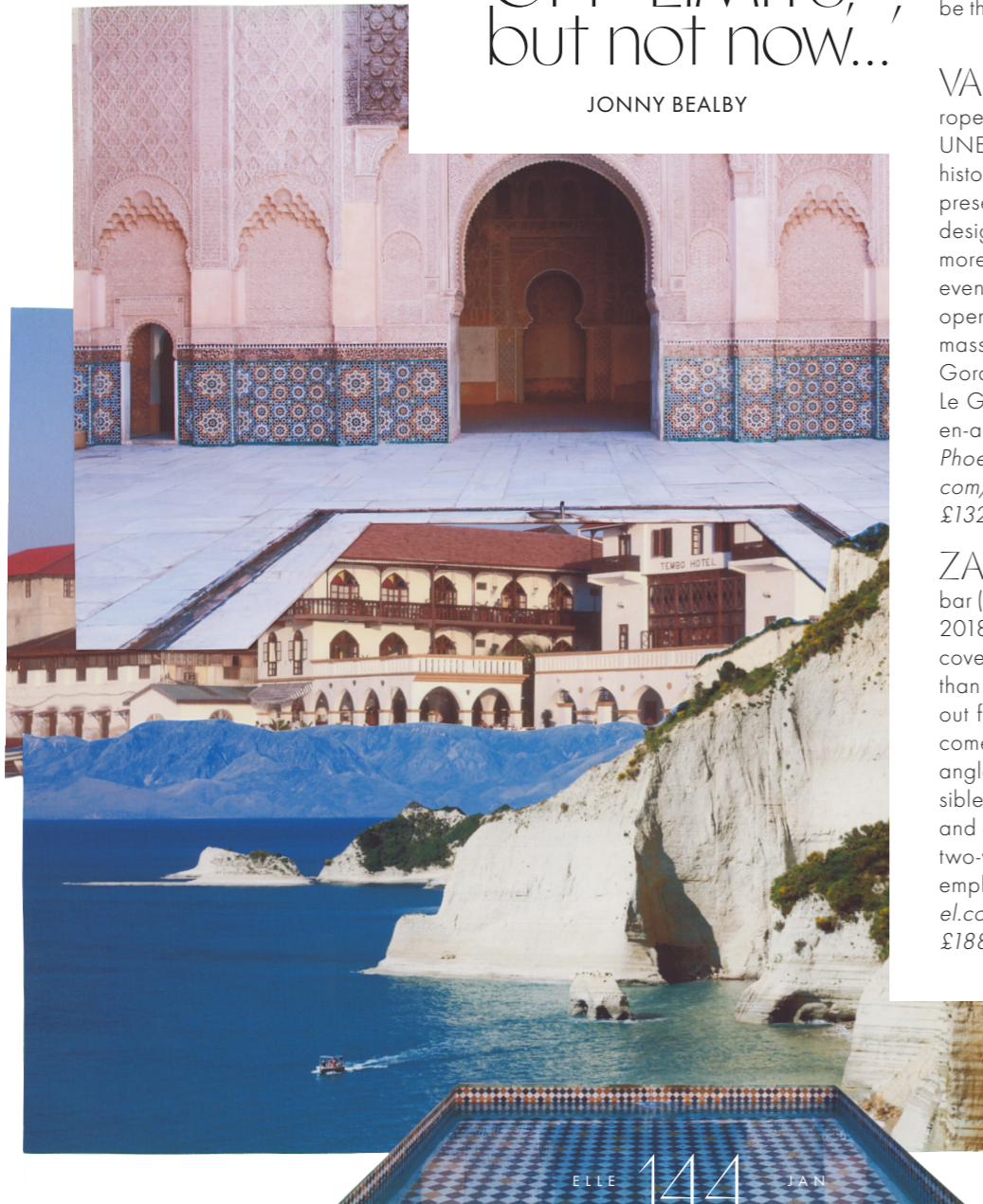
GEORGIA AND THE CAUCASUS Despite the beautiful mountains, epic scenery, ancient monasteries and fortresses, Georgia was once almost off-limits, as getting there was such a hassle it put people off going. Now, though, Georgian Airways (georgian-airways.com) has launched direct flights from London Gatwick to Tbilisi, and Hungarian airline Wizz Air (wizzair.com) now flies from London Luton to Kutaisi, the jumping-off point for the Svaneti Mountains. Stay at *Hotel Kazbegi in the mountains* (designhotels.com), doubles from £63, room only, or *Hotel Tbilisi in town* (designhotels.com), doubles from £114, room only.

KYRGYZSTAN If you ever needed a reason to go to Kyrgyzstan beyond the spectacular natural

beauty of Song Köl Lake and the Mountains of Heaven, now you've got the World Nomad Games 2018. Probably the largest international gathering of nomadic culture in the world, athletes from more than 40 countries compete in traditional nomadic sports such as horse riding, archery and eagle hunting. The 15-day Kyrgyzstan Explorer takes in the highlights of the country, including Tash Rabat and Song Köl Lake. *Tailor-made trips can be arranged by Wild Frontiers* (wildfrontierstravel.com).

'Georgia was once almost OFF-LIMITS, but not now...'

JONNY BEALBY



CO-FOUNDER OF ORIGINAL TRAVEL

TOM BARBER

MOROCCO This is the most exotic place in quick reach of the UK, and access just got easier thanks to a new internal flight route linking Marrakech and Fez, usually a six-hour drive apart. Adding to Marrakech's ranks of swanky hotels, the new Oberoi (oberoi.com), with 25 acres of citrus orchards and olive groves, is opening in early 2018. Fez is a medieval treasure, and the gateway to the less-explored north. Take a road trip from Fez, via the beautiful blue city Chefchaouen, to Tamouda Bay, home of a new Banyan Tree (banyantree.com), and with a Ritz Carlton (ritzcarlton.com) and Chedi (ghmhotels.com) to come, this is set to be the new Moroccan beach hangout.

VALLETTA, MALTA 2018's European Capital of Culture, is, according to UNESCO, 'one of the most concentrated historic areas in the world', with beautifully preserved streets that are home to 320 designated monuments. This year sees more than 140 special projects and 400 events planned, but the biggest buzz is the opening of The Phoenicia, just outside the massive city gates. The latest project from Gordon Campbell Gray (One Aldwych, Le Gray Beirut), The Phoenicia has a seven-acre garden and a beautiful pool. *The Phoenicia, Valetta, campbellgrayhotels.com/originaltravel.co.uk*. Doubles from £132, room only.

ZANZIBAR Look out for Zuri Zanzibar (zurizanzibar.com), which opens May 2018; it will have a beach within a large cove, resulting in a longer-lasting high tide than other local beaches (the tide goes out for miles, meaning no swimming till it comes back). There's also a sustainability angle, with as many local products as possible used in the construction of the hotel, and a programme to give local students a two-year hotel diploma and subsequent employment. *Original Travel* (originaltravel.co.uk) offers stays at Zuri Zanzibar from £188pp per night, half board.

WHO WHAT WHERE 2018...



CO-FOUNDER BLACK TOMATO

TOM MARCHANT

CORN ISLANDS, NICARAGUA These two islands, with their lush jungles, colourful Creole culture, underwater worlds and the best lobster we've ever tasted, are the dream beach retreat. The opening of the new ultra-luxurious, ultra-private Calala Island (calala-island.com) means guests can be Robinson Crusoe-d in style in luxe bungalow suites right on the beach.

TASMANIA, AUSTRALIA We're pinning Australia's Tasmania as one to watch for 2018 with a thriving arts scene, hip foodie haunts and flavour-packed wines to rival those of the mainland. The new Macq 01 Hotel gives you a chic place to rest your head and check out the art scene in countless galleries. *Macq 01* (macq01.com.au). Doubles from around £210, room only.

MEXICO CITY Named the World Design Capital for 2018 (wd0.org), more regeneration is underway and the city's inventive food scene and architecture take it to the top of many must-see lists. Plus, Mexico City's thriving design scene is home to hot new designers, architecture tours, and after-hours trips to galleries and artist collectives.

'With its lush jungles and COLOURFUL culture, Nicaragua is a DREAM'

TOM MARCHANT

Collages: Gus & Stella. Photographs: Four Corners, Getty Images